



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

City of New Bedford
Office of the Mayor
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup
(508) 979-1410
Elizabeth.Treadup@ci.new-bedford.ma.us

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P R E S S R E L E A S E

City Names Official Poet Laureate

John P. Landry to Serve as City's Poet Laureate

New Bedford, Massachusetts- New Bedford, Massachusetts- Mayor Scott W. Lang today named John P. Landry as the city's official Poet Laureate. New Bedford-born Landry, who is well known in the region as a poet and teacher at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth and Bristol Community College, has many years of writing experience and enthusiasm for poetry. The Poet Laureate's official duties for the city will be to compose and read poetry at various venues and special events within New Bedford.

"John Landry is respected by his fellow writers in poetry circles both in New Bedford and around the country. I look forward to his poems inspiring and uplifting the youth in our city," said Mayor Lang of the new poet laureate.

Landry's works have been published in newspapers, magazines, chapbooks, anthologies and more. Recently he has contributed poems to the *New College Review*, and the 50th anniversary issue of *Beatitude*. He has read poetry in places like City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco and the United States Library of Congress at the invitation of U.S. Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks. His poetry often reflects the character and environment of daily life in the city of New Bedford. Influenced by Massachusetts poets Charles Olson, John Wieners, Robert Creeley and others, Landry's knowledge of the history as well as his relationships with other recognized poets make him qualified for the poet laureate designation.

Jack Hirschman, Poet Laureate of the City of San Francisco, California and mentor to Landry praised New Bedford's new official poet and called him "a tireless activist for the community where poetry and the people together construct the tomorrow."

Landry, eager to begin working in his new capacity said, "I will continue to showcase local literary talent and will work to draw poets from around the country to the city of New Bedford. I hope to strengthen New Bedford's participation in the wider poetry

community. I look forward, via writing, readings, and education, to continue to offer our city a look at itself through the eyes of local literary talent."

A poet laureate is an individual who composes poems, and has the ability to express poetic ideas in beautiful language. The laurel, in ancient Greece, was sacred to Apollo, and was used to form a crown or wreath of honor for poets and heroes. Landry follows Everett Hoagland who served as City of New Bedford Poet Laureate from 1994 through 1998.

The following is the complete text of City Poet Laureate John Landry's poem "Dancing to the Music of the Spheres."

Dancing to the Music of the Spheres

Living for the benefit
of all living things,
the Earth turns
in D-flat major
dwelling neither in the past
nor in some imagined future
the rivers crossed lead
to more rivers to cross
nothing is separate
everything's connected

polis is I's
after all
individuals
participating
in the common wealth we are
a gathering of energies
an amazing coincidence of nature
grateful for the chance
to begin again to heal not harm
 everything is the hinge upon which
 everything is hinged

the heat of action rises
from the compost of our dreams
 what we practice
 what we nurture
 that's where our values lie

the only revolution
is the revolution of the heart
which beats its mantra: *change change change*
and we are not who we were a moment ago

we are a collage of fragments
engaged by the rush of
generous land
generous sea

tossing superstition to the curb
and walking through myth
stepping into the Now
bowing to the light of life
in each other's eyes

John Landry

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